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American School
of Classical Studies
at Athens

A SERIES OF COLOSSAL STATUES AT CORINTH

[PLATES I-VI]

ONE of the conspicuous results of the excavations at Corinth in 1900 was the discovery of a series of colossal statues of Parian marble just inside the Agora, a little southwest of the west buttress of the Propylaea. The series consists of at least four members, only one of which is so well preserved that it can be accurately measured. The upper part is given in PLATE I. It is in three large pieces, and practically nothing is lacking.¹ The only important parts which are lost are the nose, which was a separate piece set in, either originally or after an accidental break; the right forearm, and a part of the left calf. The right foot, from the instep to the tips of the toes, was found a year later about 20 m. to the northwest. This statue will ultimately be set up and appear as a whole; but since this has not yet been done, it must make its impression piecemeal or by the aid of a drawing. It has a height of 2.57 m.

That it was an architectural statue was at once evident. At its back is a pilaster which extends from the plinth to about the height of the top of the forehead. The figure is, as it were, a high relief hewn out of the pilaster. In the upper end of the pilaster is a dowel hole. Near by was found an irregularly quadrangular Corinthian capital (Fig. 3) with an iron dowel firmly fixed in it. When the dowel of the capital is inserted in the hole on the top of the pilaster, the head of the statue comes

¹ A view of the other two parts is shown in Figs. 1 and 2. All three fragments are here reproduced on nearly the same scale.

up snug against the capital, both the head and some of the acanthus leaves of the capital being cut away to effect the fitting. The abacus of this capital has a peculiar shape, as given in the annexed cut (Fig. 4); the dotted line indicates the place of the head of the statue, and the side *a* is fitted to be the support of a curved architrave block. While we have the complete block for the corner at the left of the curve (Fig. 5), of



FIGURE 1.—FRAGMENT OF COLOSSAL MALE FIGURE.

the block which would fit this abacus only a small portion is preserved (Fig. 6). Among the cornice pieces discovered was early found one with a straight face on one side and a curved face around its left corner which corresponds to the curve in the architrave block. This gave the certainty that our figure stood at a point where an entablature which it supported, after extending to this point from the right, made an inward curve. At this corner the figure stood as a pseudo-Caryatid, not

actually bearing the entablature, as do the maidens of the Erechtheum, but propping up the capital on which the entablature rested. To give the semblance of effort, the figure, though in other respects entirely in repose, with the right



FIGURE 2. — FRAGMENT OF COLOSSAL MALE FIGURE.

elbow resting upon the left hand, has the head bent forward under its burden.

This figure has its head turned slightly to the left (our left). A second figure practically a duplicate of this, preserved only down to a little way below the hips, but with its face perfectly

intact, has its head turned slightly to the right (PLATES II, II A¹). We were clearly warranted in placing this figure at the



FIGURE 3. — CORINTHIAN CAPITAL.

left of the other at the corner where the entablature reëmerging from its curve proceeds to the left in a straight line. Not only

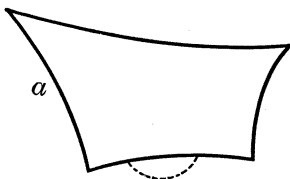


FIGURE 4. — ABACUS OF A CORINTHIAN CAPITAL

do the two figures incline their heads toward each other, but their elbows on these approaching sides are supported on their

¹ PLATE II A is repeated from Plate III in the Supplement to Vol. IV (1900) of this JOURNAL.



COLOSSAL MALE FIGURE FROM CORINTH



SECOND COLOSSAL MALE FIGURE FROM CORINTH: HEAD



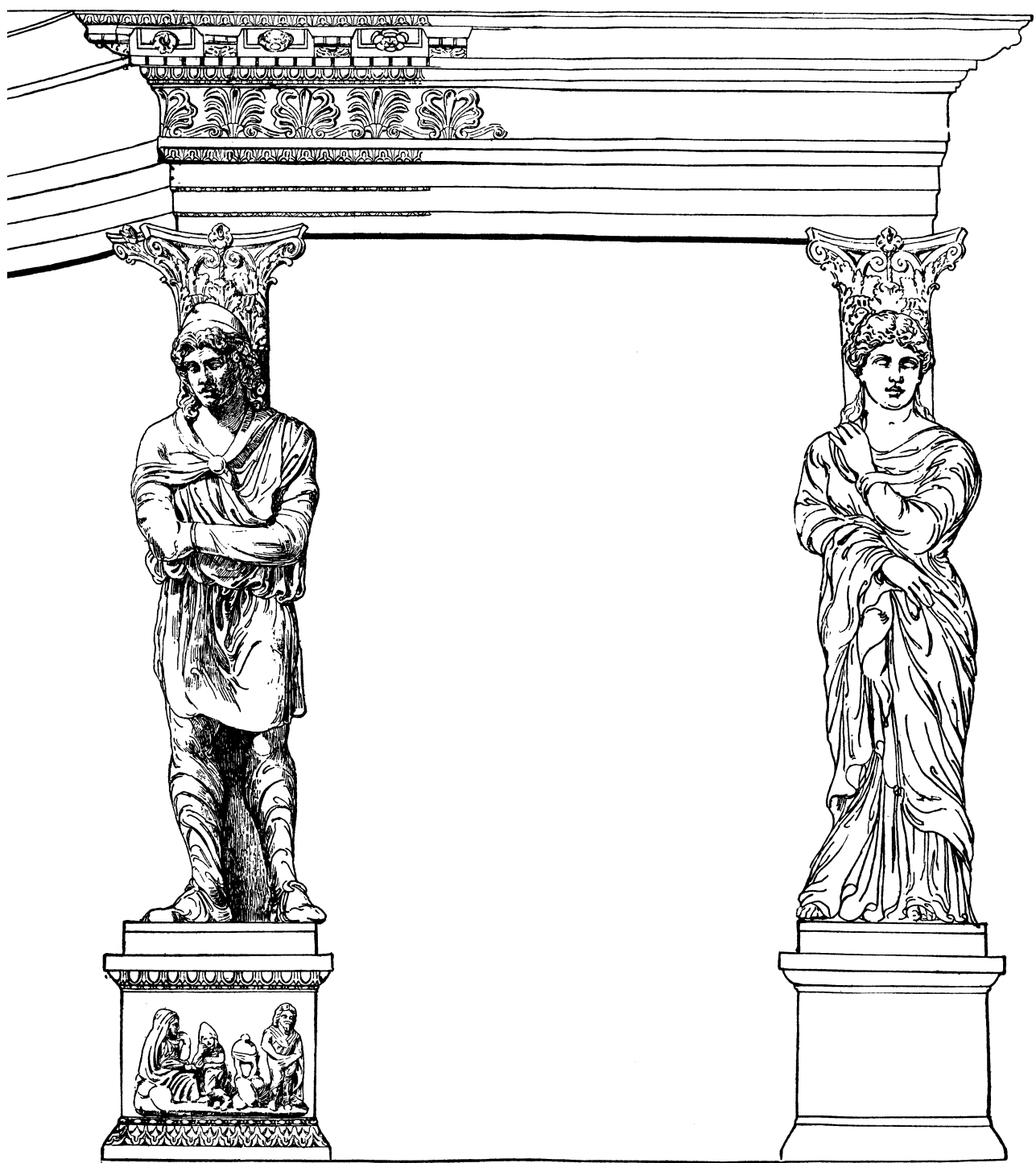
SECOND COLOSSAL MALE FIGURE FROM CORINTH



COLOSSAL FEMALE HEADS FROM CORINTH



SERIES OF COLOSSAL STATUES
(From the drawing by Hja)



STATUES FROM CORINTH

wing by Hjalvor Bagge)

PLAQUE OF COFFERED CEILING: HELIOS AND SELENE





SERIES OF COLOSSAL FIGURES FROM CORINTH

(Proposed foundation for the Porch in the right background, under a column of earth)

other hands. That there is an appropriateness in this arrangement is felt if we conceive of the positions as being reversed and the heads averted. In the actual arrangement we seem to have a companionship in labor.

Two bases were found at the same time and place (Figures 7, 8), with ornamentation similar to that of the architrave and cornice blocks; and as the plinth of the statue, the feet of which are preserved, fits into the socket at the top of one of them, we

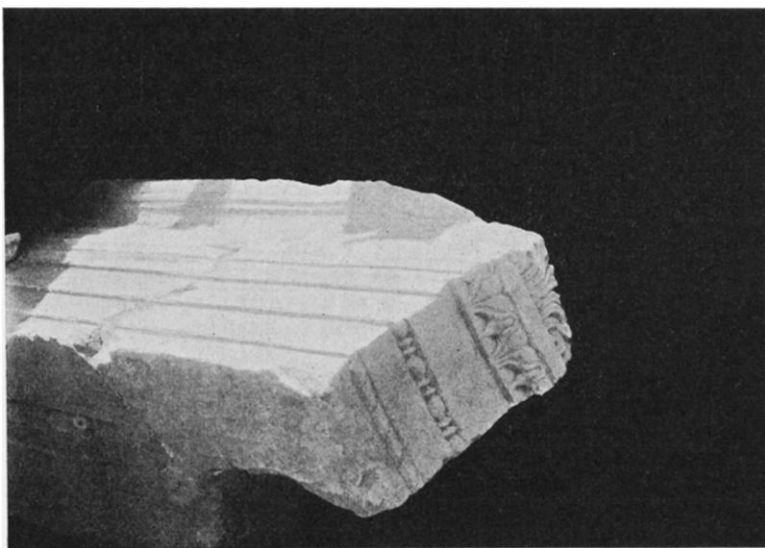


FIGURE 5. — CORNER ARCHITRAVE BLOCK.

clearly have the material for restoring a whole system from the stylobate up to the cornice. The height of the system may be computed as follows: base, 0.87 m.; figure, 2.57 m.; height of the capital above the base, 0.30 m.; architrave, 0.64 m.; cornice, 0.30 m.—making a total height of 4.68 m.

Two other heads (PLATE III), also of colossal proportions, were subsequently found close by the others, and were recognized as belonging to the same system, from the fact that their backs were cut away in the same way as the others. It now becomes clear that the building with which we were dealing

had a considerable extent. A square Corinthian capital with the acanthus leaves hewn away as on the one mentioned before, made it probable that the figures to which these heads belonged stood to the right and left of the others at points where the entablature ran¹ straight.

A restoration of a portion of the system is here given in PLATE IV from the drawing by a Danish draughtsman, Hjalvor Bagge, and while the final treatment of the architectural part is still difficult, yet along with the treatment of the statues at least a provisional treatment of it must be essayed.

Assuming now that we have practically all of the material, the total length of the cornice pieces found is about 15 m. which would, then, be the minimum length of the building. The architrave blocks fail to afford clear evidence as to the extent. Enough pieces were found mixed up with the cornice blocks and statues to make a considerably greater length than 15 m. But they vary so much in their size and ornamentation

¹ It is possible that in two battered torsos we have parts of the bodies to which these heads belong, although one of the torsos was found at a considerable distance to the east.

While we have pieces both of architrave and cornice to fit both ends of the curve, one unexpected result comes out of a study of our material, *viz.* one of the two curved architrave blocks which has, like the other, the elaborate ornamentation in six bands, a twisted roll, a bead ornament, a leaf-and-tongue ornament, a broad band of anthemion, then another bead ornament, and at the very top an egg-and-dart moulding, is succeeded on the left by a straight piece with none of this ornamentation but with plain mouldings (Fig. 5), while the other one is succeeded on the right by a straight piece with all the ornamental bands (Fig. 6). If there was but a single curve in the entablature, this difference would make a striking asymmetry. We may, therefore, have to admit the possibility of a second curve, which would reduce this asymmetry. This would of course imply the loss of a good deal of the material with which we are dealing. While this is possible, it is perhaps safer to reckon only with what we have, and to suppose that there was only one curve, accepting the asymmetry.

What we have called a curve is not a complete curve; the blocks that begin it from either side run back into a wall, as is shown by their formless butt ends. Figure 5 gives the parts around the corner to the left, viewed from below. The companion curved block, which comes in from the right, could never have made a joint with the one to the left, as both butts are equally rough hewn. A piece of indeterminate size was certainly set in to mediate between the two inner ends of these curved blocks. Some ornament, as a medallion, may have served for this purpose. The radius of the curve is 1.65 m.

that there remains considerable doubt as to how many of them can be placed in the same line. The two curved blocks with the anthemion ornament have a height of 0.64 m. and so of course the straight piece which joins one of them on the left.¹ The two whole straight blocks, each 3 m. long, and several pieces, all having the same ornament as the curved blocks, have a height of 0.72 m., and so can hardly have been in the same



FIGURE 6. — BLOCK FOR ABACUS.

line with the others. Two other blocks, also 3 m. long, have a height of 64 m. and lack the peculiar ornamentation. They lack also the band of myrtle leaves on the under side which all the others have.²

¹ The curve and the anthemion ornament begin on the end of the plain straight block, which is made into a little curve for the curved blocks to take up and continue.

² These two plainer blocks bear letters, mason's marks, upon them as none of the others do. One has I on one end and K on the other. The second has T

My first impression was that the system under discussion must find its place on the Propylaea, for the following reasons: (1) The massive foundations of the Propylaea were the only ones in the vicinity which seemed capable of bearing such a weight. (2) The statues and the architecture were all found



FIGURE 7. — BASE FOR COLOSSAL FIGURE.

within 12 m. of the west end of the Propylaea, a little to the southwest, in a bunch which could be circumscribed by a radius

and V. Since the letters can hardly have had any other purpose than to mark the joints, the same letter would probably be applied on each side of the joint, and there would be as many blocks as letters. This would make at least nineteen blocks, and supposing them to be of equal length, about 60 m. of that one kind of blocks. This great extent is enough to make one separate them from the rest. In the work of 1901 there were found stylobates of two long porches, one east of the temple hill, and bordering the road to Lechaëum, and the other west of the same hill, bordering the Agora on its north side. It is to this latter that these pieces might with considerable probability be assigned, on account of its proximity to the spot where they were found. Foundations to go with the other pieces must be sought elsewhere.

of 5 m. Furthermore, a few scattered pieces were found close up against the Propylaea on the side toward the Agora. (3) The colossal figures, two of which represent barbarian captives, as well as the reliefs on the bases, appeared to be appropriate ornaments of what Pausanias calls the "Propylaea,"



FIGURE 8. — BASE FOR COLOSSAL FIGURE.

but which was, as we know from coins of the imperial times from Domitian to Commodus,¹ nothing more nor less than a Roman triumphal arch. But between the hope of ultimately placing the figures on the Propylaea and the difficulty of doing so satisfactorily, the publication of them has been already too long delayed.

I have at last, however, fully abandoned the hope of bringing the system into connection with the Propylaea because by no possibility can we connect it with that building without doing

¹ Imhoof-Blumer and P. Gardner, *Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*, pl. F, nos. 97-100.

violence to its structure as shown by the coins and by our excavations. All the architrave blocks which we can assign to the system have mouldings on both sides, which implies that they stood out free, a position irreconcilable with a triumphal arch.¹ Furthermore, any horizontal architecture could not be allowed to cross and interrupt the arch or arches of the Propylaea; and our statues could not lift their entablature to a height above these arches unless their bases were set upon a very high pedestal, whereas these bases with their broad projecting band at the bottom are clearly not meant to be so placed. Lastly, our architrave blocks are not long enough to span the distances which they would have to span in order to reach from buttress to buttress of the Propylaea.²

But in order not to leave the system absolutely without foundations, hovering in mid air, I venture to give it a sub-structure on which it may be adjusted. The line of the Propylaea buttresses is prolonged to the west by what we at first called a wall. It appears in PLATE VI, in the right background under the pillar of earth. But this is no mere wall. It is 4.10 m. wide, and should be called a platform rather. It is made up of large and small stones bonded by mortar, a mixture often called *opus incertum*. Its top was very level, and probably once had stone blocks upon it, to form a stylobate. In fact, at the end next to the Propylaea it has a layer of good quadrangular blocks of poros. Of the solidity of this core of *opus incertum* we had ample proof when, turning the flank of the Propylaea, we forced our way through it, in order to get our track into the Agora. At its western end it ran over the top of the ancient Greek fountain, and in order to clear the latter of the incumbrance we had to operate upon the mass with dyna-

¹ It is true that there are projections in front of the two great buttresses of the Propylaea; but these probably supported columns, which one plainly sees on the coin of Hadrian.

² It may be added that we have a plaque of a coffered ceiling, representing in two of its coffers Helios and Selene (PLATE V), which may with some probability be assigned to our system, but which could by no possibility find a place on an arch.

mite, and had still more convincing proof of its solidity. Its supporting power being conceded, its length of at least 25 m.¹ gives room and a pleasing freedom to deploy upon it the figures and their entablature.

The strongest reason for supposing that it carried them is that they were all, with a few insignificant exceptions, found close by it. If 12 feet seem too shallow for any building, it may be said in the first place that this was simply an ornamental border of the Agora. It is almost a matter of course that the figures faced toward the Agora; and this assumption is corroborated by the circumstance that they were all found where they would naturally lie if they had simply fallen forward from the southern edge of the platform. The side toward the north was perhaps closed by a wall which would break the north wind, and so make the porch, as far as its capacity went, a pleasant resort in the winter.

The concavity in the façade of the porch is such a striking feature that one naturally looks for parallels. One finds these, to compare small things with great, in buildings like the Septizonium at Rome² and in the Nymphaea of Side and Aspendus,³ which are simply façades with no more depth than the proscenium of a theatre. These buildings are called by Lanckoronsky⁴ "Scheinpaläste." Our building probably never had, like them, a second story, although it is possible that it had. All three of the buildings just referred to are supposed to have been fountain façades. In the case of the Septizonium the Capitoline plan of the city shows quite plainly the periphery of a water basin,⁵ and it is universally so restored. If it should be deemed necessary to bring our façade into line with these buildings as a fountain façade, it would not be diffi-

¹ At its western end, when it became broken up in ancient times, it probably once continued beyond where we now trace it, and joined at a very obtuse angle the stylobate of the porch before mentioned, which is also badly broken at its eastern end.

² Baumeister, *Denkmäler des Klass. Alt.*, Abbild. 1707, 1708.

³ Lanckoronsky, *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens*, I, Taf. xix, xxx, xxxi.

⁴ *Op. cit.* I, p. 144.

⁵ *Loc. cit.*

cult to do so. The foundations run right across those of the ancient Greek fountain façade before referred to (p. 16). Water was once delivered in considerable quantity in this region. In Roman times it may have been brought to a higher level than in Greek times. But not to press too far the curve as a proof of similar use, it is perhaps safer to treat our building as a simple ornament of the Agora. It had a height of about 15 feet above its stylobate, and may have been sufficiently imposing. The fact it was a sort of extension of the Propylaea might make the features adapted to a triumphal arch, *viz.* the captive barbarians, especially appropriate.

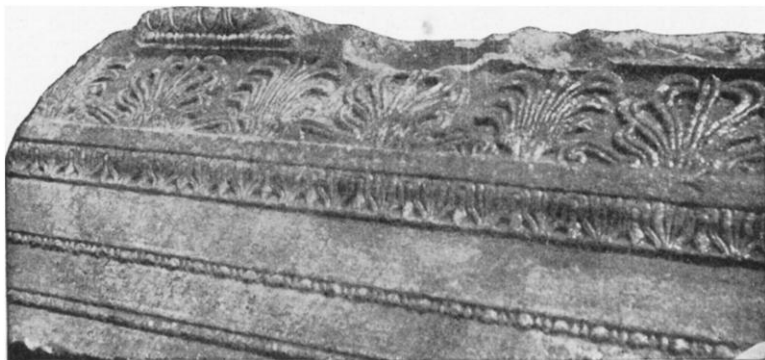


FIGURE 9. — ARCHITRAVE BLOCK.

It has been repeatedly assumed in the description that the building in question belonged to the Roman city. Both the ornamentation of the blocks and the style of the statues exclude all doubt on that point. The carving on the most elaborately ornamented architrave blocks (Fig. 9) suggests the work on the Erechtheum; but one must not observe too closely, or the illusion will pass away. The carving looks elaborate only at a distance. The cornice blocks show a striving after effect in that a great variety in the forms of the rosettes is introduced (Fig. 10).

But it is the sculptural element that gives the most convincing proof, if any were needed, that the building is not only Roman, but at least as late as the second century of our era. The

two colossal figures are not without expression. The one with the perfectly preserved face has, in spite of a certain coldness, some dignity. Its companion would perhaps be just as effective if it had not lost its nose. But the two heads to which we have not yet attached bodies with any certainty are as expressionless as some heads that are to-day affixed to façades in Athens and New York.

As to the style of the reliefs on the two bases, one can hardly use the word "style" without a smile. The representation is



FIGURE 10. — CORNICE BLOCK.

absolutely uncouth. Its shabbiness cannot be adequately explained by calling it the work of a "prentice hand." Such work could hardly have been tolerated in an age when taste for the beautiful was still alive.

It is time, however, to turn away from the temptation to vituperate, and to discuss what is represented by the figures and the reliefs. To begin with the figures :

That barbarian captives are here represented is obvious. The type is one which appears on Roman triumphal arches,¹

¹ *E.g.* Arch of Septimius Severus, Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, Abbild., 1985 ; Arch of Constantine, *ibid.*, no. 1968, where the figures of captive Dacians are taken from the earlier Arch of Trajan.

and is abundantly represented in museums.¹ That most of the museum figures came from triumphal arches is probable; and in certain cases, as in the Lateran Museum, no. 710,² it is certain that they were supporting some part of the architecture, inasmuch as the back of the head is cut away as in ours.

Our second figure, however, is so youthful in appearance, like so many representations of Mithras,³ that on its discovery we declared, half in jest, that we must be approaching a Mithras temple.

The sex of the figures, in spite of the rather feminine appearance of the faces, can hardly be doubtful. The lack of the development of the breast, and the dress, particularly the pointed cap and the trousers, are certain tokens, and need not be enlarged upon. So familiar do the figures seem that we might almost imagine some young barbarian captives to have slipped from their places on one of the well-known triumphal arches.

The hand raised to support the chin and propped upon the other arm, from its frequent recurrence, appears to indicate dejection and also that the arms were bound.

The two heads without bodies are clearly female. They probably also represent captives, although they lack all expression of pain like that which throbs in the features of the well-known "Thusnelda" in Florence.

It might be possible from minute study of details to ascertain to just what nation these captives belong. The pointed cap, at any rate, known under the name of the Phrygian cap, points to an Asiatic nation.

The subject of the reliefs (Figures 7, 8) is plain enough. In the centre of one of them is a trophy consisting of a suit of

¹ Clarac, *Musée de Sculpture*, nos. 2163, 2164, 2162, 2161 A, 2161 B, 2161 C, 2161 G, 2161 F. Nos. 2162 and 2161 A show an arrangement of the arms similar to that of our figures.

² Helbig, *Führer durch die Sammlungen Klass. Altertümer in Rom*, p. 476. Mitchell, *Hist. of Ancient Sculpture* (Fig. 285).

³ Clarac, *Musée de Sculpture*, nos. 1191 A, 1194, 1191, 1190. Most similar to our figure, except in position, is no. 2085 (Paris).

armor set up on a tree trunk. A Victory rushes and flies toward it from the right, in order to deposit upon it a wreath. The cramped position of her legs and the monstrous wings make it probable that we have lost one monstrosity more by the breaking off of the head. To the left is a captive Asiatic with pointed cap, and arms bound. Thus we have brought close together the glory of the victor and the woe of the vanquished.¹

This relief in a measure helps to interpret the other. In the centre may be recognized an enormous helmet standing stiffly on its cheek pieces, crushing down two diminutive crossed shields, a trophy of a different shape from the other. My first thought was that the man on the right was the victor thanking God in a sort of boastful humility for his victory; the face had a suggestion of Christian art. But it is almost certain that he is also a captive with his hands bound. With this agree his exceedingly meek looks.

He may be an Asiatic, like the others, with his cap doffed. He is bearded probably because he is represented as the father of a family. The suggestion has been made that he is a German; but we must leave his nationality doubtful, although it would be highly satisfactory to find in a provincial city a memento of the wars of Marcus Aurelius with the Marcomanni. The group on the left is very interesting. A diminutive figure, probably a boy, with the same pointed cap and trousers as the large statues on the bases, leans his head on his hand, supporting his elbow on a woman's knee. It is an attitude of dejection. The woman, alone of all the figures, has a touch of dignity which has suggested to one good critic of sculpture that she might on this account be intended to represent a divinity, Rhea Cybele for example. But this would be departing from the sphere in which both reliefs seem to fall. I take her to be either a simple captive woman or perhaps the representative of a captured country. It has been noted that con-

¹ The left corner is in a very crumbling condition, and the figure of the captive was split off. It was necessary to hold it in position while the photograph was taken.

quered nations were often represented by the Romans as women with one or more children at their knees.¹ Were it not for the pointed cap, one might be tempted to see here also Germany.

RUFUS B. RICHARDSON.

ATHENS,
June 24, 1901.

¹ Bienkowski, *De Simulacris Barbararum Gentium apud Romanos*, p. 10:
“In Gestalt einer einsamen, höchstens von einem oder zwei Kindern begleiteten Frau, welche unter einem Tropaeon oder inmitten von Waffen sitzt.”